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# Soviet Press: A Red View of the U.S.

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MOSCOW, July 12—The deputy editor of Pravda, after visiting the United States early this year, described American press coverage of the Soviet Union as "bourgeois propaganda" and said the press "wants to conceal the truth about the Soviet state and continues to write and speak about our country in a distorted light."

The description, with an appropriate change of adjectives, exactly fits Soviet press coverage of the United States in the opinion of most Westerners here. That opinion is supported by a survey by this correspondent of the five most important Soviet newspapers.

Despite the one-sided selection of news and the heavy ideological and critical tone in almost every story, an understanding or objective view shows up from time to time.

This occasional objectivity, combined with the probability (suggested by several Soviet citizens) that few people here believe the general run of their press, may mean that the Soviet picture of America is not completely distorted.

The survey reveals a gloomy image, however.

It covered these newspapers from Jan. 1 through June 30, 1970: Pravda, the Communist Party organ; Izvestia, the government paper; Sovetskaya Rossiya, a Central Committee newspaper often associated with party hardliners; Komsomolskaya Pravda, the youth newspaper, and Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star), the ministry of defense paper.

These papers usually run only four or six pages a day, but in six months they carried 911 articles about the United States. This included reports of only a few lines, which sophisticated Soviet readers often note more carefully than turgid ideological tracts.

Many articles fit more than one subject-category and were counted for each one they fit. The 911 stories thus produced 1,025 category entries.

Nearly half of these were about the Vietnam war, domestic opposition to it, the Middle East and other foreign-policy matters (see table on Page A16).

Words like "reactionary," "aggressor" and "criminal" occurred almost as often as "American" in these articles. One picked at random spoke of an American attempt to form a Saigon-Phnom Penh-Vientiane-Bangkok "axis" to serve as "the instrument of the aggressive and neocolonial policy of the United States."

Economic articles led the domestic categories—primarily articles about inflation, recession, unemployment, malnutrition, strikes and other problems. The second biggest group were articles on drugs, violence, crime, inadequate social services, horror movies and other aspects of a "sick society."

Most of these articles were based on American press reports—on facts or slices of facts. A Soviet correspondent loves to send a four-inch story reporting that American public health workers have said that "millions of citizens of the richest capitalist country... live in cruelest need and unsanitary conditions." Soviet correspondents seldom write about the income, possessions, food or clothing of the average American.

Soviet articles on racial conflict, police and other repression of American dissenters and student protests frequently overlapped. It did not surprise observers here that the press of the heavily controlled Soviet society preferred articles about police beating students to articles about students trying to change their society.

The Soviet press gave roughly equal space to the U.S. Communist Party and its friends; general American politics (including some objective articles) and the American space program (including the Apollo 13

## Soviet Press Coverage of U.S.

Jan. 1 to June 30, 1970

CATEGORY NUMBER OF ENTRIES

### FOREIGN

U.S. aims or activities in Indochina .....	204
American foreign policy in general .....	145
Congressional, popular opposition to Vietnam war .....	105
U.S. aims and activities in Mideast .....	32
Strategic arms talks, opposition to arms race .....	21

Total foreign .....

### DOMESTIC

Economic problems .....	89
"Sick society," including crime .....	82
"Militarism," "reaction," CIA activities, etc. ....	75
Racial conflict .....	73
Police and other repression of dissent .....	50
Student and other protests .....	20
U.S. space program, including Apollo 13 .....	30
General politics, mostly national .....	29
U.S. Communist Party and its friends .....	29
Miscellaneous .....	14
Three-line accounts of U.S. nuclear tests .....	10
Anti-Soviet demonstrations by Jewish groups .....	8
Arguments with American historians .....	5
American culture .....	4

Total domestic .....

The newspapers also found room for a miscellany on such things as the fate of whales marooned on a Florida beach (neutral) and folk singer Pete Seeger (favorable).

Only four articles of the 1124 dealt with American culture. Some observers concluded that the authorities feared general readers might be seduced by too much description of decadent bourgeois books, theater and films.

One of the four said John Wayne was given his Academy Award not for "True Grit," as was officially stated, but for his work on and in "Green Berets," the film about Special Forces in Vietnam.

The survey did not include 11 articles published last year by two Pravda correspondents who traveled around the United States.

They too emphasized such things as right-wing extremists, racial conflict, the living conditions of the poor and the Indians, the peace movement and the Vietnam war exploding on their motel-room television.

But they also described "a beautiful land, well taken care of, where it seemed that everything around it, peaceful and carefree,

They particularly liked such phenomena as American hospitality, drive-in restaurants and the rapid pace of skyscraper construction.

And they concluded, "We must be objective. We have to admit that we said more

often than we would have liked, 'We do not yet know how to do this. It would be nice to introduce it in our country.'"

None of the articles covered by the survey had the first-hand, personal quality of these 11 pieces by Boris Strel'nikov and Igor Shatunovsky.

There were some equivalent acknowledgements of American achievements, however—as in the articles by Lev Tol'kunov, editor in chief of Izvestia, who was among the Soviet editors who toured the country this year.

For example, Tol'kunov could not conceal the impression that factory automation made on him, or his admiration for McKinsey and Co.'s methods of overhauling inefficient managements. He also wrote a fairly accurate description of the state of the American two-party sys-